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ABSTRACT

This study is an inquiry into the processes of linguistic adaptation. Its purpose was to investigate the factors which are likely to influence change and retention of regional dialects outside of their regional context. Specifically, the focus of the study was on native Oklahoma speech in the Tulare area of rural California. Data were gathered from informal taped interviews of 11 informants representing the middle, lower middle, and working classes. The interviews included a reading selection, which was found to be most useful for comparing dialect feature frequencies of the informants. The study suggests that among the factors influencing linguistic adaptation, social class is the most significant determinant of regional dialect change in a non-regional context. Age at the changing of speech communities and duration of residence also appear to affect the solidification of regional speech forms. The volume includes a contrastive analysis of Tulare and Oklahoma vowel pronunciation. Appendices contain statistical tables and charts, the reading passage used, and words elicited in the interviews. (Author/AM)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REGIONAL AND SOCIAL DIALECTS AND LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION

by

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FL009552

A thesis
submitted in partial
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ABSTRACT

This study is an inquiry into the processes of linguistic adaptation. Its purpose is to investigate the factors which are likely to influence change and retention of regional dialects outside of their regional context. The study is intended to be broad in scope, touching on various factors which attribute to selection or rejection of a local speech variety by speakers of a differing regional dialect. The study suggests that among the factors influencing linguistic adaptation, social class is the most significant determinant of regional dialect change in a non-regional context. Age at the changing of speech communities and duration of residence also appear to affect the solidification of regional speech forms.

The specific focus of this paper is on Oklahoma speech in rural California (Tulare and vicinity). Data were gathered from informal taped interviews of eleven informants of varying social status. The interviews included a reading selection which was found to be most useful for comparing dialect feature frequencies of the informants. While the limited number of informants constrains the universality of conclusions, discussions of each informant's background and speech usage in different contextual styles shed light on the complex web of interrelationships which hold between regional and social dialects.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although regional variation in speech has been the object of study for the American dialectologist during the greater part of the twentieth century, current emphasis has been placed on the investigation of varieties of American English which differ for social reasons. In regional studies, social variation of linguistic forms has not been completely disregarded. The investigators of the Linguistic Atlas intended to account for social as well as regional variation in American English.[1] Unfortunately, their tools for dealing scientifically with social variation in language were limited to vague, undescriptive terms such as "rustic, folk, cultured, educated and uneducated" speech. In addition, linguistic geographers assumed degree or level of education to be the sole determinant of social class. Pickford, in her appraisal of the methods and procedures used by linguistic geographers, has written: "American linguists have obscured the nature of American social classes by defining them chiefly in terms of educational level, leaving other important attributes

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[1]Hans Kurath, A Word Geography of the Eastern United States (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1949), preface.

to be evaluated less consistently."[1] A brief examination of the Linguistic Atlas clearly indicates that the linguistic geographer was primarily concerned with substantiating boundaries of dominant regional speech varieties and not boundaries of social speech varieties.

The social dialectologist, as opposed to the linguistic geographer, has concerned himself with divergent speech varieties of various sub-cultures. The social dialectologist studies speech varieties which are "restricted by the operation of social forces to representatives of a particular ethnic, religious, economic, or educational group."[2] Studies of linguistic diversity of different social groups must be precluded by definitive socioeconomic rankings of the groups under investigation. "The correlation of social status and linguistic performance requires careful delimitation of each."[3] Studies in social dialectology have generally fallen into two categories: (1) descriptive studies, i.e., analyses of the nonstandard linguistic forms of specific groups; or

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[1]Glenna G. Pickford, "American Linguistic Geography: A Sociological Appraisal," Word 12 (1966): 211-33.

[2]Raven McDavid, "Dialect Differences and Social Differences in an Urban Society," in Proceedings of the University of California at Los Angeles Sociolinguistic Conference, ed. William Bright (Hague, Netherlands: Mouton Publishers, 1966), pp. 72-83.

[3]Peter Trudgill, The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich, Cambridge Studies in Linguistics, vol. 13, ed. W. Sidney Allen, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 33.

(2) studies of linguistic stratification among different social groups in a single area.

Descriptive studies of regional variation, in keeping with the fundamental techniques of general linguistics, are based on contrastive analysis, that is, the speech variety of a given region is defined in terms of structural and lexical differences from the usage of another region. Descriptive studies of social dialects are similarly contrastive, but define and describe vertical differences, i.e., divergent usage in a single area, instead of horizontal differences of dominant speech varieties of various regions.[1]

The history of settlement is important for both the sociolinguist and the regional dialectologist, but for different reasons. The linguistic geographer traces the settlement history of the territory he is investigating and attempts to correlate the origins of settlement and their later migrations with the actual data on speech usage which he has gathered. The social dialectologist, on the other hand, is interested in the emergence and development of sub-cultures and their corresponding speech patterns. The more he knows about the lives of his informants, the clearer will be his understanding of their speech patterns.

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[1]David W. Maurer, "The Importance of Social Dialects," Newsletter of the American Dialect Society 1 (1967): 2.

While the emergence of regional dialects within the United States stems from the migration of early groups of settlers with varying European and British backgrounds into different geographical regions, social variation in speech in this country has developed from a different set of circumstances. McDavid cites two basic situations in which social dialects arise where (1) "different groups within the same community acquire different status, thanks to cumulative differences in education and wealth and power, so that the speech of one group is deemed worth emulating and that of the other is not"; (2) "groups of original settlers differ in their social status or where a large group of new immigrants may acquire a peculiar status in the community."[1] McDavid has stated three types of "social dialect problems" which are resultant from immigration: (1) social variation in the standard language of the community by speakers of foreign languages; (2) nonstandard usage by native speakers in a given region; (3) nonstandard usage in one region by speakers of a "substandard" dialect from another region.[2]

The body of this paper is concerned with a problem which arises from this third situation. The study draws on the conventional techniques and concepts of both regional

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[1]Raven McDavid, "Historical, Regional and Social Variation," Journal of English Linguistics 1 (1967): 33-34.

[2]Ibid.

and social dialectology while employing some original procedures at the same time. It is not intended to be a conclusive project but rather a pilot study aimed at disclosing the complexity of interrelationships which hold between regional and social dialects and their influences on the processes of linguistic adaptation.

Movements of various ethnic and social groups from one location to another within the continental United States have been commonplace from the time of the earliest immigrants. Such movements generally result from poor economic conditions or social oppression. One such movement of a large number of Texans and Oklahomans took place in the 1920s and 1930s during an extensive drought which blighted the lives of thousands who depended on agriculture for their livelihood. These people were forced to make one of two choices: to surrender their life-styles and seek employment in urban areas, or to settle in other agricultural regions of the United States where they could find the kind of employment for which they were best suited. As people are naturally reluctant to accept change, large numbers of these Southwesterners chose the latter alternative.

The San Joaquin Valley, a great natural basin of rich soil, is one of several areas in California where agriculture is an extremely prosperous enterprise. Grain crops are grown throughout the year. The summer growing season begins in March and ends in early November. Southwesterners came to the San Joaquin Valley in large numbers, bringing with

them a subculture that was different in many ways from the life-styles and customs of both rural and urban native Californians. They also brought a speech variety which marked them as a non-native group, and identified them as members of a low prestige subculture. One typical town in and around which many of these people settled is Tulare, with a current population of 17,000. It is located in the central San Joaquin Valley.

If the local speech variety of a given community is to be preferred over a non-local variety, there must be sufficient motivation for such a preference. Ferguson and Gumperz have stated that "if two speakers, A and B, of a language X communicate in language X and if A regards B as having more prestige than himself and aspires to equal B's status, then the variety of X spoken by A will tend towards identity with that spoken by B."[1] The variety spoken by A, because of its negative prestige values, may be regarded as a social dialect.

The findings of this study show that the language variety which is labeled "Oklahoma speech,"[2] though a regional variety in origin, is similar to the variety spoken

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[1]William Labov, "The Social Setting of a Linguistic Change," in Sociolinguistic Patterns (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), p. 314.

[2]The term "Oklahoma speech" will be used hereinafter to refer to the variety of pronunciation which distinguishes the informants' speech from the speech of native Tulareans or "Tulare speech."

by A in the hypothetical model above. Oklahoma speech, then, has in effect become a social dialect in a non-regional context. This study attempts to determine those social forces which both restrict and alter the usage of Oklahoma speech in a non-regional context, and to discuss the significance of each.

CHAPTER II

THE STUDY

The present study was initially designed to investigate the speech of native Oklahomans in the vicinity of Tulare, California, with the intent to demonstrate the stratification of regional dialect features across social classes. Such stratification would indicate that: (1) certain dialect features carry social stigma outside of their regional context; (2) the stigma attached to such features reflects social status in the speech community both internally and externally; (3) the reflection of social status by stigmatized dialect features provides motivation for speakers from the upper social strata and by speakers who have advanced in social status to adopt the local dialect. The influence of other social factors such as age at the changing of speech communities and duration of residence on the process of linguistic adaptation would also become apparent.

The linguistic variables for such a study would have to be shared by all Oklahomans within their native region. Since it is "generally assumed that differences in grammar reflect social differences, and that differences in vocabulary

or pronunciation reflect regional differences,"[1] syntactic differences would presumably be widespread across social classes in Oklahoma and hence should be excluded from investigation.

Many of the vowels of Oklahoma speech contrast strongly with those of standard usage in Tulare. Considering the problems in dealing with syntactic variables and since "vowel features . . . are more likely than consonant features to be subject to a combination of regional and social significance,"[2] the contrasting vowels of Oklahoma and Tulare speech were chosen as the linguistic variables for the study.

It was postulated that the phonetic norms of the vowels of speech in Oklahoma were quite similar for all of the informants during their residence in Oklahoma. This assumption was supported by comments from the informants regarding the nature of linguistic variety among different social classes. Informants were asked to comment on differences in speech between the educated and uneducated in their native state. Answers from those of the upper social strata were invariably that the speech of the uneducated was grammatically different from that of the educated, i.e., lack of agreement, use of double negatives, etc. Lower class informants said that

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[1]Raven McDavid, "Some Social Differences in Pronunciation," Language Learning 4 (1952): 105.

[2]Walt Wolfram and Ralph W. Fasold, The Study of Social Dialects in American English (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 146.

they used different "expressions" or colloquialisms than "sophisticated" people. Both groups agreed that pronunciation was "basically" the same.

Since the study was intended to be a qualitative investigation as opposed to a quantitative analysis, careful attention was given to selecting not only informants of varying social status, but those of varying ages, varying time spans of absence from their native residences, and varying degrees of social mobility. It was desirable to include informants who had advanced in social status, since a primary concern was to observe significant changes in speech patterns which presumably result from the acquisition of a more prestigious social station. Conceivably, informants of differing social classes from the same immediate families could provide the most reliable data for correlating speech change with social change. This idea is in keeping with Kurath's suggestion that "the investigation of speech tradition in individual families of different sociocultural backgrounds would be a fruitful enterprise . . . for studying the process of linguistic adaptation as a factor in linguistic change."[1]

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[1]Hans Kurath, "The Investigation of Urban Speech and Some Other Problems Confronting the Student of American English," Publication of the American Dialect Society 48 (1968): 7.

Studying socially stigmatized speech forms can be particularly offensive to those who use the forms and are cognizant of the stigma attached to them. The residents of Tulare and vicinity seem to agree that prolific use of Oklahoma speech forms is a prime criterion for including one as a member of the "Okie" subculture. Such hypersensitivity created a major obstacle in locating informants who would be willing to be interviewed.

Selecting informants to meet the wide range of criteria mentioned above proved to be a difficult task in the small town of Tulare. Since Tulare is the writer's home town, it was thought that contacts would be easier to make there. Through questioning personal acquaintances, a number of native Oklahomans were identified. All those contacted by telephone refused to be interviewed. Only two informants who did not know the writer or an immediate acquaintance of the writer consented to an interview and they did so reluctantly and skeptically. All contacts were informed that the study was concerned with dialect change. One contact who refused said "Oh! You mean you're studying ignorant people!" This degree of negative response in indicative of the social stigma attached to Oklahoma speech.

Locating a significant number of informants from the middle and upper social strata turned out to be more difficult than expected. The study was conceived with the idea of including informants from five social classes: upper middle,

middle, lower middle (upper working), working and lower class. Because of limited time and lack of contacts, only sixteen informants were actually interviewed. The present study includes only twelve of the original sixteen informants because apparent redundancies seemed to obscure the findings. The informants represent only three social classes instead of the intended five: middle, lower middle, and working class. The number of true upper middle class residents in the Tulare area is highly restricted and the extreme lower class is, for all practical purposes, irrelevant to the study.

Delimitation of social class was originally a subjective matter due to the difficulties in locating informants. After the interviews were conducted, a simple Index of Social Characteristics (ISC), based on Wolfram and Fasold's discussion of social class delimitation, was devised to confirm the writer's subjective evaluation of the informants.[1] Three criteria, education, occupation and income, were used with an arbitrary 1-6 scale for each category to rank the informants respectively. Total scores of the three scales determine social position. Higher scores rank informants lower in social class and vice versa. The scales for each category and total score of social-rank equivalents are shown in Chart 1, Appendix A.

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[1]Wolfram and Fasold, Social Dialects in American English, pp. 41-45.

Vital statistics and social class rankings for the informants are shown in the Table of Social Variables, Appendix A. All informants were native Oklahomans, even though dialect features of the nonstandard variety used by Oklahomans are widespread among many working-class people in Tulare who did not come from Oklahoma. Social class rankings in parentheses immediately right of column F in the Table of Social Variables are indicative of subjective social-class rankings which might be applicable for the corresponding informants.

The interview was quite unstructured and conducted rather informally. As previously stated, informants were told that the study was concerned with dialect change. Production tasks were generally preceded by informal chats about linguistic diversity in the United States or life in Oklahoma. This helped to reduce inhibitions of the informants. Recording vital statistics and discussing the informants' backgrounds were followed by formal elicitation procedures.

Formal production tasks included a word list, which was elicited by presenting cards with pictures on them, and a reading passage, found in Appendix B. This type of interview is similar to that used by Labov and others to isolate various contextual linguistic styles.[1] The primary reason for

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[1]Labov, "The Isolation of Contextual Styles," in Sociolinguistic Patterns, pp. 70-109.

adopting this format was that it was not known which style would be most reliable for comparing dialect feature frequencies across social classes. As it turned out, feature frequency in casual style for the lower social strata was so disproportionate to that of the upper strata that it was of little value since the intent was not to study the stratification of contextual styles across social classes. True formal style was almost nonexsistent among the lower strata and it was quite difficult to consistently discern formal from casual style among upper strata informants. Pronunciation in word list styles, being highly guarded, was generally very similar for all informants. Reading style seemed to produce the most heterogeneous and interesting results, including evidence of style shifting. Moreover, the reading passage offered the most reliable and accurate data for comparison. Informants were told that the interviewer was interested in recording how naturally they could read the story. Concentrating on reading naturally would hopefully help to direct the reader's attention away from careful or guarded pronunciation.[1]

A linguistic insecurity production task, whereby informants' attitudes were checked against their actual usage, was included in some of the interviews. This task was modeled after the same used by Labov.[2] The informants were presented with

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[1]Labov, "The Social Motivation of a Sound Change," in Sociolinguistic Patterns, p. 13.

[2]Labov, "The Reflection of Social Processes in Linguistic Structures," in Sociolinguistic Patterns, p. 117.

a number of words which have socially significant variants in pronunciation, such as "thing," "school," "pliers," "stairs," and were asked to select the form they thought was correct. They were then asked to indicate which form they usually used themselves. This task was given following the reading selection and generally after a considerable amount of informal conversation. Results often showed a discrepancy between the informants' actual usage, the forms which informants thought they used, and their attitudes on correct usage.

CHAPTER III

OKLAHOMA AND TULARE SPEECH: A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF VOWEL PRONUNCIATION

The speech of many Oklahomans in Tulare and vicinity differs from the native speech in pronunciation in three ways: (1) the pronunciation of vowels, (2) the stress patterns, and (3) the intonation patterns.

These differences are described in this chapter. The description will be used as a reference in discussing the informants' speech and should serve as an aid to the reader in his understanding of the general subject. This description is intended to focus on those aspects of pronunciation which generally characterize Oklahoma speech in and around Tulare. The following description is not a comprehensive analysis of the pronunciation features of Oklahoma speech in California. Oklahoma speech is being described here in terms of contrast with Tulare speech. No claim is being made that the phonetic characteristics of the vowels in this description are necessarily representative of the general speech patterns of Oklahomans living in Tulare.

The most marked differences in pronunciation between native Tulare speech and the speech of many native Oklahomans who live there is that of vowel pronunciation. This difference

has been described by some of the informants in terms of the presence or absence of a "wang." This term might be formally interpreted as referring to the difference in phonetic character between the vowel phonemes of Oklahoma speech and other varieties of American English.

McDavid has specified three basic types of segmental pronunciation differences:

(1) Differences in the pronunciation of the individual phonemes.
(2) Differences in the occurrence of the individual phonemes.
(3) Differences in the system of phonemes.[1]

The differences to be considered here fall generally within the first category above. There are some differences in the occurrence of phonemes which deserve mention.

The vowels of Oklahoma speech are selected on the basis of their presence in the data and their phonetic differences from the same vowels in Tulare speech. They are described according to the properties which they exhibit under stressed conditions. Kurath has pointed out that the phonic characteristics of vowels can be most readily perceived by ear under conditions of heavy stress, "especially at the end of a phrase or utterance where they are most apt to be prolonged."[2]

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[1]McDavid, "Some Social Differences in Pronunciation," Language Learning, p. 105.

[2]Hans Kurath and Raven McDavid, The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 4.

The following description is based on the phonic approach of Kurath and McDavid's The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States. The description incorporates a "unitary" interpretation of phonemic segments for the reasons outlined in the above work.[1] A unitary approach to phonemic interpretation would treat vowel segments such as the stressed vowel in "beet" as a single unit /i/, whereas a binary analysis of the same segment would posit it as /iy/, a combination of vowel plus semi vowel. A unitary approach in this study allows for a more precise and consistent description due to the nature of phonic variation between Oklahoma and Tulare speech.

From a unitary standpoint, stressed vowels fall into two classes, free vowels and checked vowels. Free vowels occur in medial and word final positions whereas checked vowels occur only medially. There are eight contrasting free vowels and five contrasting checked vowels between Oklahoma and Tulare speech. The vowels which characterize Oklahoma speech follow a general pattern of upgliding and ingliding. The free vowels are diphthongs in both Tulare and Oklahoma speech but they tend to be "slower" in Oklahoma speech, i.e., a lengthy onset followed by a short, quick glide. The checked vowels, generally monophthongal in Tulare speech, are mostly ingliding diphthongs in Oklahoma speech. Stressed vowels in Oklahoma speech are generally more tense.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 3-5.

The vowels of Oklahoma speech are often accompanied by an additional feature which may be defined as an element of stress or emphasis placed on the onset of the vowel. This element of stress is not to be confused with the suprasegmental phoneme which distinguishes pairs like pérmìt/pèrmít. This feature of emphatic stress is superimposed on the initial element of stressed vowels and is most readily perceived at the ends of phrases or in words receiving semantic emphasis, e.g., "I told hím [above all others] he'd better get móving." This kind of pronunciation feature might be better understood in terms of extra heavy stress on the onset of stressed vowels.

The Free Vowels

The free vowels in Tulare speech are upgliding diphthongs. In general, both elements of these diphthongs receive the same or nearly the same degree of stress, particularly before lax consonants and in final position. The phonic representations of the free vowels are given as a reference for the discussion of the free vowels which characterize Oklahoma speech. The free high and mid vowels of "three," "too," "pay," and "tow," respectively [i. - ii], [u. - uu], [ei - e^{i}], and [ou - o^{u}], tend to vary much less than the free low vowels in Tulare speech. The diphthong of "toy" varies at the onset from [ɔ-ʌ] to [o], but the distance of the up-frontglide usually extends to [I - i]. The diphthongs in "pie" and "now" are more often pronounced [ai - a^{i}] and [au - a^{u}] respectively. However, slightly fronted onsets of both occur enough to

be mentioned. Also, the upglides of both are frequently reduced in length and distance before /r/ and /l/.

Stress, emphasis, and length occur on the initial elements in complex free vowels. Onsets of the free front vowels of Oklahoma speech are considerably lower than they are in Tulare speech. The back free vowels, as in "two" and "tow," are somewhat fronted and rounded. The most noted feature of the low free vowels in "pie" and "toy" is the absence or reduction in distance of the upglide. /au/ has variants which differ positionally as in [flaɐr] "flower" and [kaæ$^{>u}$] "cow." The vowel in "law" is classified as a free vowel in Oklahoma speech while the same vowel in Tulare speech merges with the checked vowel in "pond." The free vowels of Oklahoma speech are discussed below in further detail.

(1) The vowel in "three," "need," "grease"
/θri, nid, gris/

Oklahoma variants of this vowel are [e.$^{\wedge i}$- I.$^{\vee i}$- I.^{i}]. They are more frequent before nasals as in "bean" and "thing," but occur before voiced consonants as in "please." They occur in speech which exhibits a considerable number of the regional dialect features. Variants which have the greatest articulatory distance from the standard Tulare pronunciations are generally more typical of Oklahoma speech. The variant [I.^{i}] might then be considered as a product of the process of assimilation since it is quite close in articulatory distance to standard [i - i.] of Tulare speech.

(2) The vowel in "two," "school," "room"
/tu, skul, rum/

Oklahoma variants are [ʉ - ʉ^{u}- ʉ.^{u}]. These variants are tense and somewhat rounded. Another less frequent variant is ongliding [^{ʉ}u.], which occurs in open syllables generally under emphatically stressed conditions. Another variant which occurs in words such as "new," "Tuesday," "due," is [iu], the same vowel used in standard "few," "puke," "use." This variant is common to many speakers of Midland and Southern dialect backgrounds in Tulare.

(3) The vowel in "day," "make," "name"
/de, mek, nem/

Oklahoma variants are [ɛ^{v}i - ɛi - e.^{i}]. The variants of this vowel follow the same pattern as the variants of /i/. The onset of both of these front vowels is considerably lower than the standard Tulare pronunciations. Onsets of Oklahoma /i/ and /e/ are more open and subsequently more lax than in Tulare speech. This lax onset followed by a tense, high upglide provides a sharp contrast between the front vowels of Oklahoma and Tulare speech.

(4) The vowel in "know," "boat," "stone"
/no, bot, ston/

This fronted tense Oklahoma variant, [o.$^{<^{u}}$], occurs generally under conditions of emphatic stress.

(5) The vowel in "high," "night," "five"
/hai, nait, faiv/

This vowel is the most heavily marked pronunciation feature of Oklahoma speech. The Oklahoma variants are characteristic of the pronunication throughout the South and Southmidland dialect areas.[1] The variants of Tulare speech are relatively few and

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[1]Ibid., p. 109.

limited in range. They are [ai - aI - aɪ]: the initial element of the diphthong is slightly backed in some instances and the final element is somewhat prolonged before voiced consonants. At any rate the phonetic differences of these variants are so minor that they are not socially significant. The Oklahoma variants, on the other hand, differ considerably in: (1) the point of articulation of the initial element, (2) length of the initial element, (3) presence or absence of upglide, (4) direction and distance of upglide, (5) swiftness of upglide. The variants of /ai/ in Oklahoma speech are [a - $a^{ə}$ - $a^{ɛ}$]. The initial elements include lengthening, fronting, and backing. The upglide is often completely deleted before [r]. The variant [a], with the upglide deleted, is generally lengthened before voiced consonants in words at the end of a phrase or utterance and words receiving emphatic stress. Oklahoma variants are often retained by many who have lost most of their regional dialect features to the local dialect.

(6) The vowel in "law," "bought," "dog"
/lɔ, bɔt, dɔg/

Low vowels, being unstable in most varieties of American English are extremely difficult to discriminate by ear. Kurath categorizes the vowel in "crop," "cob," "moss" as it is pronounced in the Eastern United States as a checked vowel with allophones and diphthongs belonging to the phoneme /a/.[1] This vowel contrasts with the free vowel in "law"

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[1]Ibid., p. 104.

"bought" and "dog." In Tulare speech, the vocalic distinctions between "crop," "cob," "moss," "law," "bought," "dog" are generally so minimal that variants can be considered members of a single phoneme. Thus, /a/ can be considered a free vowel phoneme in Tulare speech.

In Oklahoma speech the contrast between minimal pairs such as "cot"/"caught" is significant. Pronunciation of the vowel in "cot" is generally the same in Oklahoma and Tulare speech. The vowel in "caught," on the other hand, follows the general pattern of free vowels in Oklahoma speech, i.e., a stressed and prolonged onset followed with an upglide. Oklahoma variants of this vowel are [$a^{>U}$ - $ɔ^{<U}$]. This variant is noted in a variety of words such as "coffee," "dog," "salt," "paw," words which are generally pronounced with a low back vowel in the Northeastern United States. Pronunciations of the vowel in "law," "dog," "bought" in Oklahoma speech are therefore considered as free vowel variants, whereas Oklahoma pronunciations of the vowel in "crop," "cob," "moss" are checked variants. This vowel is not included in the discussion of checked vowels since there is little or no contrast with its pronunciation in Tulare speech.

(7) The vowel in "about," "proud," "cow"
/əbaut, praud, kau/

Generally pronounced [$aə^{≥U}$ - $a^{<U}$], the onset of this vowel in Oklahoma speech is quite fronted in relation to the Tulare pronunciation. It is also more tense and the distance of the

upglide is shorter. [a< - a] with the upglide deleted is common before /ɚ/ as in the word "flower."

(8) The vowel in "coil," "boy"
/kɔil, bɔi/

This vowel assumes the general southern pronunciation [ɔ^{e}] before /l/ in Oklahoma speech. In free position [ɔ^{I}] is the characteristic pronunciation.

The Checked Vowels

The stressed checked vowels of Tulare speech are, generally speaking, short and monophthongal. Their pronunciations are generally those found most widely throughout the western United States in "bit," "put," "bet," "but," "bat." The checked vowels in Tulare speech are sometimes slightly lengthened, especially before voiced consonants. They are also prolonged in casual and unguarded speech. These vowels can also occur with some degree of ingliding towards schwa in a more casual context. While the checked vowels are generally monophthongal in the Northern dialect areas of the Eastern United States, ingliding diphthongs are more characteristic of the South and South Midland dialect regions. The fact that characteristic features of Southern speech, such as ingliding checked vowels, are mildly present in Tulare pronunciation might be attributed to the large number of settlers in this agrarian area from the South and South Midland.

The checked stressed vowels which are characteristic of Oklahoma speech are ingliding diphthongs. They are most readily perceived in words which are emphatically stressed. Such words

often, though not always, occur at the end of a phrase or utterance. The onsets of checked front vowels of Oklahoma speech are raised in relation to those of Tulare speech. This raising is accompanied by tenseness in articulation as opposed to the generally lax nature of checked vowels in Tulare speech. The initial elements of checked vowels of Oklahoma speech are often lengthened under conditions of emphatic stress and before voiced consonants. The lax ingliding toward schwa which generally follows the tense, raised, lengthened onsets of these variants provides an even sharper contrast to the counter variants of Tulare speech. The checked vowels which distinguish Oklahoma speech from Tulare speech are described here in further detail.

(1) The vowel in "hit," "kid," "dishes"
/hIt, kId, dIsez/

Oklahoma variants are [I^ᵉ - Iːᵉ - ɪ^ᵉ - ɪː^ᵉ]. The lengthened variants occur more frequently before voiced consonants. The onset of these diphthongs is tense and the inglide lax.

(2) The vowel in "foot," "could," "push"
/fUt, kUd, pUs/

Fronted and ingliding [ʊᵉ - ʊːᵉ] are the common Oklahoma variants. [ʌ] as opposed to Tulare [U] is found in the words "but" and "sooty."

(3) The vowel in "bet," "dead," "guess"
/bɛt, dɛd, gɛs/

The variants of this low-mid front vowel follow the same pattern as the variants of /I/ in Oklahoma speech. They are [ɛ^ᵉ - ɛː^ᵉ], and occur frequently before /r/ in words such as "stairs," "care."

(4) The vowel in "hat," "mad," "pasture"
/hæt, mæd, pæs͡čer/

This vowel has a wider range of variation than any of the checked vowels so far discussed. As a front vowel, the onset is raised and tense. Upgliding variants [æ^ɨ - æ^.ɨ] occur before palatals as in "patch" and "pasture." The ingliding variants [æ^ə - æ^.ə] are more prevalent before voiced stops and continuants as in "sad" and "dam." They occur less frequently before voiceless stops and continuants. In such instances, the inglide is either very subtle or completely deleted.

(5) The vowel in "nut," "sun," "buzz"
/nʌt, sʌn, bʌz/

The pronunciation of this vowel in Tulare speech is generally lax. In Oklahoma speech the onset of this vowel is tense and raised toward [ʉ], and the following glide is in and down toward schwa. This variant generally occurs in words under heavy stress, which are often at the end of phrases or utterances as in "That sure was fun ([fʌ͡ən])." Length is often an added feature before voiced consonants.

There are several distinct differences in the occurrence of phonemes in Oklahoma and Tulare speech. Some examples elicited in the interviews appeared in the words [s͡ʌt] for "soot," [wa<t] for "what," and [kɛ˥nt] for "can't."

Stress and Intonation

A marked feature of Oklahoma speech is exhibited in the deviant stress patterns of a considerable number of two syllable words where primary stress usually (as in Tulare speech) falls

on the second syllable. Some three syllable words in which the final syllable is under reduced stress also fall into this category. In Oklahoma speech, primary stress is shifted to the initial syllable of these particular words. This usually, though not always, results in vowel lengthening and/or diphthongization. A number of words in which this stress pattern occurs are proper nouns such as "Vermont," "July" and even "Tulare." In Oklahoma speech these words are pronounced [vér.mənt], [ju.ᵘlaˋᴵ], and [tu.ᵘlɛrˋᴵ]. A significant observation is that of initial syllable lengthening in all three cases. The name "Tulare" is generally pronounced with three syllables. The phonic representation above shows that the usual penultimate and final syllables receive one degree of stress. The [I] of the usually final syllable (pronounced in Tulare speech [i]) is transcribed as a glide to show that the juncture with the preceding [r] is quite minimal. [I] in this instance might be better interpreted as a semisyllable. Final syllable reduction in three syllable words where this shift in stress occurs is common in Oklahoma speech.

Examples of stress shift among common nouns in Oklahoma speech are "guitar," "cement," and "entire," pronounced respectively [gɪ.taˋᵉr], [sɪ.ⁱmənt], [ɪ.ntaˋᵉr].

There is a definitive distinction between the intonation patterns of Oklahoma and Tulare speech. The properties of intonation make it quite difficult to measure without the aid of spectrographic equipment, so it is difficult to comment in detail on this linguistic feature. It will have to suffice

to say here that the range of highs and lows is generally much greater in Oklahoma speech, especially when it is emotionally colored. Intonation patterns of informants from the upper social strata were generally quite different from those of the lower strata. This difference suggests that intonation patterns characteristic of Oklahoma speech are readily lost in the process of assimilation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Chart 2 in Appendix A shows the occurrence of nonstandard free and checked vowel pronunciations for each of the informants regarding their responses to the reading selection. Informants are arranged on the chart by social status in descending order. Chart 2 should be read in conjunction with the Table of Social Variables. The chart indicates not only the frequency of feature occurrence but also, and even more important to this study, the degree of nonstandard pronunciation. Where there are several nonstandard variants for one phoneme, phonetic representations on the left stand for pronunciations which are more deviant from standard speech in Tulare than those on the right. The more deviant features probably carry greater social stigma in most instances. Lengthening of vowels is indicated by asterisks beside the informants' numbers. Frequent use of lengthened vowels is indicative of little progress toward adopting the local speech standard.

Feature frequency in the first half of the reading passage was compared with that of the other half for each informant. For more than half of the informants, there was a greater frequency of nonstandard features in the latter half of the passage. This disproportion demonstrates that the

contextual style of speech became increasingly casual and that informants generally had a tendency to guard their speech. Stigmatized features would presumably show increased frequencies as style becomes less formal.[1] Style shifting seemed to be more prevalent among the lower social strata. There was a greater frequency of nonstandard features in the first half of the passage for those informants who did not shift styles.

We would expect to find, among the lower social strata, a greater frequency of occurrence of nonstandard pronunciation features and a greater degree of deviation from phonetic norms of standard speech in Tulare. While comparison of the extreme upper and lower segments of the chart illustrates this general pattern of stratification, there are some apparent contradictions in the lower middle class segment of the chart, i.e., informants 6, 7, 8, and 9. The responses of these informants interrupt the expected uniformity of the chart, that is, the gradual incline of dialect feature frequency and deviation as one moves down the social class scale.

We can attempt to account for these descrepancies by (1) examining the various social factors and backgrounds of each informant, (2) applying knowledge gained from research on patterns of linguistic behavior of the lower middle class, and (3) drawing conclusions based on comparisons of the above information with the actual data.

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[1]Wolfram and Fasold, Study of Social Dialects in American English, p. 85.

Feature frequency and deviant pronunciation for informant 7 is much greater than expected, and much less than expected for 6, 8, and 9. Informant 7 was fifty years old and had been in California for fourteen years, which made him thirty-six years old when he arrived. Although his ISC score ranked him as lower middle class, he had only an eighth grade education. A social class ranking based strictly on education would place him in the lower working class. His ISC ranking of lower middle class was attributed to his recent purchase of a small dry cleaning business and success in that business. His past job experience included miscellaneous work and a number of years working for other dry cleaning businesses. He had recently purchased a new home and was enjoying many new conveniences.

Although informant 7 was in the process of acquiring new social status, his limited education and previous life-style will most probably constrain him from genuinely assimilating many of the values and customs to which his peers subscribe. His responses to the linguistic insecurity production tasks showed his attitudes toward speech usage to be quite contrary to his actual linguistic performance.

Age at the changing of speech communities appears to influence the process of linguistic adaptation. Considering our knowledge of the differences in abilities of children and adults for language acquisition, it seems likely that the earlier one changes speech communities, the more flexibility one has in controlling and directing his linguistic behavior. Regarding this study, the limited number of data restricts

any conclusive statements from being made on the operation of age on mechanism of linguistic adaptation. According to the chart, however, informants who came to California between the ages of twenty and thirty generally showed less deviation from the Tulare standard.

Considering the status of informant 7's current usage, his age on arrival in California, and his limited education, it seems unlikely that his speech patterns will change significantly in the future, despite his newly acquired social status and his attitudes toward "correct" usage.

Informant 6 had been a long-standing member of the community who held a reputable position with the local government in Tulare for many years before retiring. His ISC ranking of lower middle class was attributed to a limited education and moderate income. An extensive conversation revealed his casual speech to be flavored with residual folk cliches. Some regional vocabulary--"cubalo," "roasting ears," "turning plow"--was elicited in the word list production tasks. His assimilation of local speech patterns in more formal contextual styles can be attributed to the long term stability of his social status, his age, twenty, on arrival in California, and the duration of his residence in Tulare.

Informant 8 came from a family whose livelihood was based on subsistance farming and odd jobs. Her husband had owned a small but successful automotive business for fifteen years. As a consequence of her upward mobility she had been

enjoying the benefits of more prestige than in former years. This social advance is reflected by the apparent contrast between her speech patterns and those of her brother, informant 10, who was a member of the working class.

Since informant 10 was only five years old when he came to California, the proliferation of dialect features for him exhibited in the chart is not expected. An important point is demonstrated here, namely, that the dialect features under consideration are by no means restricted to native Oklahomans. A nativity sample taken from an annotated list of death certificates, which is prepared monthly by the Tulare County Health Department, reveals that a significant percentage of Tulare County's residents are originally from the Southern dialect region.

Because of differences in social status between informants 8 and 10, differences in their speech patterns were not surprising. At the same time, however, the feature frequency of informant 8 paralleled that of informants 1 and 2, whose ISC scores were significantly higher. The comparison was the same for informant 9. The similarity in speech patterns of these two socioeconomically different groups deserves explanation.

Informant 9, like 8, had advanced in social status over the years. Both 8 and 9 were highly cognizant of their usage during the interview at all times. Casual conversation revealed residues of their native speech variety which did not show up in more formal styles. Responses of informant 9

to the linguistic insecurity task were contradictory to her actual usage in casual style. Informant 9 proudly admitted to having undergone significant linguistic change over the years. Both informants 8 and 9 were quite opinionated on the subject of correct usage. It can be concluded that the more formal styles for informants 8 and 9 were heavily guarded and that their actual usage reflected "hypercorrect" linguistic behavior of the type referred to by Labov.[1]

The stratification of linguistic usage across social classes has been established through a number of sophisticated studies carried out in the previous decade, e.g., Labov, Levine and Crockett, Trudgill. The data represented in Chart 2 suggest, as would be expected, that social status and social mobility are the strongest determinants of the speech patterns of native Oklahomans living in Tulare and vicinity. Individuals of advanced status are more likely to adopt the community's standard of pronunciation in preference to their native patterns of pronunciation. The contrast in the usage of informants 8 and 10, as previously mentioned, demonstrated the above principle.

A similar and perhaps more significant contrast existed between informants 2 and 4 (brother and sister), who came from a semi-rural middle class background. Both had gone to

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[1]Labov, "Hypercorrection by the Lower Middle Class as a Factor in Linguistic Change," in Sociolinguistic Patterns, pp. 122-142.

college, although informant 4 had to drop out for lack of finances. Informant 2 married a medical doctor, informant 1, while 4 married an elementary school teacher. Informant 4 worked at different jobs in Tulare until he acquired enough captial to purchase his own buisness, a nursery, where he has worked ever since. The social status of these two pairs had drifted apart over the years, especially after the son of 1 and 2 became a two-time winner of the decathalon in the Olympic Games.

The difference in social status of pairs 1 and 2, and 4 and 5 was significant enough to reflect the differnces in their usage. All four informants were relatively advanced in age but upward social mobility of 1 and 2 provided the motivation for linguistic change. There were marked differences in the casual speech elicited from the two pairs, with far fewer nonstandard features in the speech of 1 and 2. Residual regional vocabulary was far more apparent in the speech of informants 4 and 5. It might be noted that both pairs of informants came from the same location in Oklahoma and were acquainted with each other while living there.

Informant 3 was yet another example of the relationship of social status and mobility to linguistic adaptation. At forty-five years of age, informant 3 was currently an assistant superintendent for a local school district. He began his career in public education as an elementary school teacher on his arrival in California when he was twenty-eight. He had lived in Tulare for a period of seventeen years.

The interview took place in his office, a formal atmosphere which made it quite difficult to elicit casual speech. Informant 3 seemed to become increasingly reserved as the interview progressed. From previous conversation with informant 3, a significant number of regional dialect features were noted. The recordings of the interview, however, revealed only faint residues of his native dialect. He said that Californians were much more judgmental with regard to speech and social status than Oklahomans and admitted to making a conscious effort to "correct" his speech patterns.

Although the speech patterns, as indicated by the chart for informants 11 and 12, are quite predictable, the relevance of these informants to the study is indispensable. The data collected from these informants provide a base for comparing the speech patterns of all the informants. Informants 7, 11 and 12 provided the widest range of nonstandard pronunciation features with regard to deviation from Tulare speech in point of articulation, vocalic length, stress, and intonation.

Highly deviant features are likely to carry greater social stigma. The chart shows certain features which are frequent in lower class usage, to be absent or nearly absent in the usage of upper strata informants, and informants who appear to use hypercorrect forms. Some of these features are variants of /i/, /e/, /o/, /I/,/U/, and / /. The low frequency of occurrence of these features suggests that they are more salient and hence more socially stigmatized. The same probably applies to stress and intonation patterns. Features

carrying a high degree of social stigma could be most useful as linguistic variables for quantitative studies of feature stratification across social classes.

This study has demonstrated that regional and social speech varieties cannot necessarily be treated as categorically different subjects; a regional dialect in a non-regional context can acquire properties characteristic of social dialects. It should be noted that such properties do not necessarily have to carry connotations of negative prestige. Exotic speech often serves to distinguish its speakers.

With regard to this study, however, it has been demonstrated that certain pronunciation features of Oklahoma speech do carry social stigma in Tulare and that this stigma triggers linguistic change among certain speakers. It is most probable that speakers who adapt quickly to local speech varieties do so because they do not want to be identified with negative prestige values reflected by stigmatized speech. This study has also shown that other social factors such as age and duration of residence are attributes of the processes involved in linguistic adaptation and that a singular generalization designed to account for adaptive processes would be highly complex. It is probable that additional factors not taken into account in this study also affect the adaptive processes.

This study has attempted to disclose the most significant issues regarding the relationships between social and regional dialects and the processes of linguistic adaptation. The writer was originally hoping for a more scientific approach

to dealing with the topic but every prospective experiment seemed to exclude too many relevant factors. After much deliberation it was concluded that a qualitative investigation of the general problem was in order before pursuing the subject in greater detail.

There are a number of possibilities for more precise investigation of the subject in the future. Isolated studies on each social variable suspect of having direct influence on adaptive processes would probably provide the information for making definitive statements on the operation of social factors on the processes of linguistic adaptation. Such studies might require controls on all social variables other than the one under direct observation. Best results would most likely be obtained by subjecting the data to factor analysis by computer.

A speech community from which many informants could be selected would be necessary. Informants could be chosen either according to the set of criteria used in this study or randomly selected.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

TABLES AND CHARTS

Chart 1
ISC SCALES

	EDUCATION
1	Any graduate degree (professional)
2	College - four years or more
3	College - one to three years
4	High School diploma
5	Ninth to eleventh grade
6	Below ninth grade
	OCCUPATION
1	Major professionals and executives
2	Lesser professionals and executives
3	Semi-professionals proprietors of local businesses
4	Techicians Skilled foremen
5	Skilled workers
6	Unskilled and semi-skilled workers
	INCOME
1	High
2	Moderately high
3	Average to above average
4	Moderate
5	Below average
6	Low

Total score social rank equivilants:

4 - 9	Middle
10 - 12	Lower Middle (Upper Working)
13 -	Working

TABLE OF SOCIAL VARIABLES

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
#1	M	72	27	45	4	M (UM)	husband of #2
#2	F	68	23	45	5	M (UM)	sister of #4 wife of #1
#3	M	45	28	17	7	M	
#4	M	70	32	38	9	M	brother of #2 husband of #5
#5	F	69	32	37	8	M	wife of #4
#6	M	68	20	48	10	LM	
#7	M	50	36	14	12	LM	
#8	F	53	16	37	11	LM	sister of #10
#9	F	62	27	35	11	LM (W)	
#10	M	42	5	37	13	W	brother of #8
#11	M	54	29	25	13	W	
#12	M	20	8	12	14	W (LW)	

A - Sex
B - Age
C - Age on arrival in California
D - Number of years in California
E - ISC score
F - Social class status
G - Relationships to other informants

CHART 2

	/i/			/u/				/e/		/o/		/ai/			/ɔ/		/au/	/oi/		/I/		/U/	/ɛ/	/æ/	/ʌ/
	e^i	I^vi	I^i	ʁ^vu	ʁ^u	ʁ^>u	iu	ɛ^vi	ɛ^i	e^i	o<u	a<-	a	a<ɵ-	a^ɵ	a<ɛ-	a^ɛ	a^>u	ɔ<u	æ^>u	a<u	ɔ^ɵ	ɔ^I	ɪ<ɵ	ɪ^ɵ	ʊ>ɵ	ɛ^ɵ	æ^i	æ^ɵ	ʌ^
1						1							1	2		1		1	1			1		2		1	1
2			1			3					1			4		1		1				2		1		1	
3			1		2	3			1	3			1	3				1		1		1					1
4						3	1						2	7	3	1		1		3				1			
5		1	1			3	1			1	2		2	5	4	2		2		1		2		2		4	
6										1				3				1		1		1		1			
7 *	1	2	3	1	2	2		1	3	3	2	5	12	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	4		7		2	2
8						1				1	1			3								1		2		1	1
9			1		1	2				1	1		2	1					1			1	1	2		1	
10 *		1	3		3	2			3	6	1		8	4		4		1		1		3	1	2			
11 **		1	2		3	3	1		3	2	2	4	5	6	3	2		2	3	2	1	2	1	6	1	3	4
12 **	3	2	2	2	5	3	2	2	2	2	5	7	6	4	4	2	2	4	4	2	4	3	4	3	2	3	4

* - Some lengthening

** - Much lengthening

APPENDIX B

FORMAL PRODUCTION TASKS

MY ECCENTRIC GRANDFATHER

My grandfather put his poor old Ford car out to pasture in 1940, for fourteen years he rode the train four mornings and four afternoons a week, getting up at 5:00 A.M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays to light the sooty old oil burner, boil his pot of coffee, and catch the dairy route man as he drove past to get his orange juice and his daily bottle of milk. After he had taken his bath, he had his half-slice of toast, his glass of orange juice, his milk, and his cup of coffee. Then he put on his bulky overcoat with its fur collar, stepped into the yard, waited two or three minutes for the local bus, and boarded the train which was due at eight A.M.

What he did during the eight or nine hours he was in his office we never knew. Maybe it was just as well that his business was foreign to us, because grandfather always took a rather calm, if not downright careless, attitude toward the law. My sister Mary used to say that she didn't care what he did as long as he would fight his suits in the courts and not in the family.

On Saturdays and when he came home at night, he might water the lawn or perhaps borrow a hammer or a wheelbarrow from Mrs. Forrest, his next-door neighbor, in a vain attempt to start the long overdue jobs of patching his roof or cleaning his garage, which was filled with everything from rusty tools to rusty pails, from broken mirrors to broken music boxes, not to mention a crop of horrid wasps which had haunted the place for years. I can still remember seeing a lot of paper towels in an abandoned chicken coop near the raspberry bed with a hank of knotted yarn coiled around a whetstone on top of the whole mess.

When the time came for dinner, grandfather would put a can on the fire and heat up some greasy stew from the night before, open a can of tomatoes, prop a book up before him, and eat with a spoon from the stove. He never seemed to take much interest in food, anyway and there weren't a lot of dishes to wash that way. I guess his stomach, teeth, and gums didn't object.

After he had rinsed off his cooking utensils, grandfather would try to get some guitar music on the radio. Wasn't entirely the best, so he seldom got it tuned in properly. He would worry about this and turn it on fairly loud--his ear for a beautiful air was, I fear, a tin one. Then he would sit down with his newspaper and amuse himself with the horrors of the world--a new Italian government, a police scandel in Washington, a revolution in Latin America, a family murder on Long Island. He had a fine time with them all, and always said that though life was no laughing matter, it was no matter if you laugh.

When he was dead tired of the bleating of the radio and the drought of international affairs, he would call his yellow mongrel dog in his loud hoarse voice. When he had rubbed him briskly with his palms and told him what a nice creature he was, he took him out and locked him in the barn by the creek for the night.

Then he came back in the house, drained a nice warm glass of milk, and climbed the stairs to his room. After he had brushed his short, coarse, white beard until it shone to the roots, he went to bed to sleep the sleep of the just.

WORD LIST[1]

car
skillet/frying pan
squirrel
barrel
corn
chimney
fireplace
horses
tomatoes
orange
greenbeans/string beans
tobacco
cigarettes
eggs
tire
wheel
window
chair
rings
suit
iron
barn
house
pasture
oil
coffee
camera
rag
boat
mushrooms
piano
Mary
washrag
towels
cow
paintbrush
concrete/cement
syrup
drain
flowers
squash

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[1] These words were elicited by showing informants pictures on four by six inch cards. The cards and word list were provided by F. H. Brengleman, Department of Linguistics, California State University, Fresno.

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